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XLIII.—*On the Egg of the Empress Augusta-Victoria's
Paradise-bird.* By Dr. A. B. MEYER.

(Plate XIII.)

THOUGH Birds of Paradise have been known for centuries, and though we are now acquainted with more than fifty species of this most interesting family, we are almost completely ignorant of everything concerning their nests and eggs. It is, so far as I am aware, only ten years ago that the first egg of a Paradise-bird (*s. s.*) was described by Mr. E. P. Ramsay in the 'Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales' (vol. viii, p. 26, 1883), viz. that of *Paradisea ruggiana*. To this I was able to add a year later the description and figure of the egg of *P. apoda*, from Aru (Zeitschr. f. ges. Orn. 1883, p. 293, pl. xvii. fig. 2), though I was not quite sure then that the broken egg in my possession really belonged to a Paradise-bird. That this, however, was the case is proved by the two eggs which I now have the privilege of describing and figuring as certainly belonging to *Paradisea augustæ-victoriæ**.

The general superficial impression made by these eggs calls to mind the eggs of certain Rails,—some specimens of

* [This species was first described by Dr. Cabanis, J. f. O. 1888, p. 119, and is figured op. cit. 1889, pl. ii.—ED.]

the eggs of *Crex pratensis*, for instance, having a similar appearance. The shell is coarse, with fine indentations and single deep pores, as in *Coracias*; it is everywhere polished and glossy, except a few of the paler and smaller spots, which are dull and glossless. The ground-colour is pale pinkish-buff (*cf.* Ridgway, Nomencl. of Col. v. 14, but lighter), longitudinally streaked and spotted over the greater part of the large end. The darker streaks are remarkable for their length (10–15 mm. long, 2–4 mm. broad, or even narrower); the deeper-lying spots are rosy grey, the darker longitudinal streaks mostly reddish brown (walnut-brown, Ridgway, pl. iii. 7), but mixed with lighter and darker tints. There are several very dark spots, others are smaller and of a glossless brownish yellow; others, again, of this same colour are glossy. The small end of the egg has few spots; the pole of the large end is almost clear of spots.

The form is ovate (Ridgway, xvi. 1), but more lengthened; the size 38×25.5 and 36.5×25 mm., and the weight 0.7 gr.

The egg of *P. apoda* is darker, with spots of the same colour, but with much broader and more isolated streaks and dashes, and the space round the pole of the large end somewhat spotted.

The egg of *P. raggiana*, as described by Ramsay (*l. s. c.*), appears to be of a similar character.

The two eggs described and figured (Plate XIII.), each from two sides and from above, were taken by the brothers Geisler, in the month of August 1890, near the village of Jakema on the Saddle Mountain ("Sattelberg"), Huon Gulf, East New Guinea, at about 250–300 ms. above the sea-level. A native having told them that he had discovered the nest of a Paradise-bird, they proceeded to the spot, but found the tree too high and big to climb it themselves. The native, however, ascended it and brought down two eggs, unfortunately leaving the nest torn to pieces between the twigs. Several females fluttered and cried around while the native was thus employed, a male having been shot just before on a neighbouring tree.

The breeding-season of *P. augustæ-victoriæ* begins in July,

when the males, in companies of from three to six, hold their dancing-parties on the high trees. Females on the wing bearing nesting-materials were often seen, but for a long time no nest could be discovered. The males were also observed with like materials in their bills, though they generally dropped them again. At the end of October a young bird made its appearance on the mountains behind Butaueng on Huon Gulf. At this time of the year the rainy season (S.E. monsoon) generally ceases, and the dry N.W. monsoon then prevails till the beginning of April. The moulting of the Bird of Paradise begins at the end of October; in January the gorgeous new feathers begin to sprout, but it is only in July that the breeding-plumage becomes fully developed in its finest phase. The brothers Geisler once observed this Paradise-bird robbing the nest of *Chalcophaps stephani*; a specimen kept in captivity also sucked other eggs with avidity.

According to the present state of our knowledge, *P. augustæ-victoriæ* has only a narrow range along the borders of Huon Gulf, north of which, in Astrolabe Bay, *P. finschi* occurs, and in South and South-east New Guinea *P. raggiana*, which is represented on the d'Entrecasteaux Islands by *P. decora*. It appears that red and yellow Paradise-birds do not occur together, but represent each other. According to the Geislers, *P. augustæ-victoriæ* never changes its hunting-ground.

XLIV.—*Field-Notes on the Birds of Estancia Sta. Elena, Argentine Republic.* By A. H. HOLLAND. *With Remarks by P. L. SCLATER.*

[MR. HOLLAND has sent me specimens of all these species for examination. I have verified the names, and have added a few remarks where necessary.—P. L. S.]

1. *MIMUS TRIURUS* (Arg. Orn. i. p. 8).

Rare, arriving here in November. The iris of this specimen was certainly pale greenish, so Mr. Hudson, who calls it

